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CONSUMER TIME

WHEN CAN I BUILD A HOUSE?

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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...MONEY IN TILL
2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!
3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER.
4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes, the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.
5. SOUND: INFANT CRYING
6. WIFE: Sh...sh...baby....
7. MAN: Must be something wrong with that kid...crying again.
8. WIFE: (SHARP) You'd be crying too if your bed were only a bundle of blankets in the back seat of an automobile.
9. MAN: (SARCASTIC) Well, it hasn't been exactly comfortable sleeping in the front seat of the car every night for two weeks...even with the gear shift on the wheel.
10. WIFE: (SOFTENING) I know, darling. My one aim in life is to sleep in a bed again. If we could only find an apartment...or even a room. Some landlords are so unsympathetic...don't they ever have babies?
11. MAN: (TIRED VOICE) No...the landladies do.

12. WIFE: I'm too tired to laugh. Do you think we'll ever find a place where the landlord at least remembers he was once a baby himself?
13. MAN: No. Never.
14. WIFE: Never is a long time to keep house in an automobile. Where are the houses anyway...or the apartments...or even the rooms?
15. SOUND: BABY CRYING...UP AND OUT...PAUSE
16. FREYMAN: That's a question so many people in America are asking today, Johnny...although not all of us are having the housing problem of that young couple.
17. JOHN: Yes, this is the worst housing shortage in the country's history, Mrs. Freyman. So today on CONSUMER TIME, we're going to hear what's being done about building more roofs for America...with the Nation's number one housing authority as our guest.
18. FREYMAN: That's right. Wilson W. Wyatt, the Administrator of the National Housing Agency will give us the very latest news on housing. But let's start at the beginning, Johnny. Do you have any idea how many Americans are actually in need of homes today?
19. JOHN: The housing people say that more than two million American families need a place to live now and there will be a million more needing homes before the end of next year.
20. FREYMAN: That makes three million! Is it really as many as that, Johnny?

21. JOHN: And how it is! Of course that includes all the veterans still to come home, the newlyweds, and some two million families already doubling up in someone else's home. In fact, there are so many people looking for decent homes...that if we build one million two hundred fifty thousand houses every year for the next ten years, we still wouldn't be caught up with all our needs.
22. FREYMAN: But in the meantime, Johnny...
23. JOHN: In the meantime, the Government is doing everything possible to break the housing bottleneck. You know, when the President asked for a housing program to meet the emergency he warned that he wanted "no little plans".
24. FREYMAN: Mmmm, I remember he was very definite.
25. JOHN: And the Veterans' Emergency Housing Program is certainly not a little program...it calls for two million, seven hundred thousand homes and apartments to be started by the end of 1947. Private industry is scheduled to produce two and a half million of these.
26. FREYMAN: Wonderful, Johnny!
27. JOHN: And the Federal government is scheduled to provide two hundred thousand temporary units during 1946. And to put teeth into their program, the National Housing Agency placed priorities on materials for building moderate-cost homes for veterans and had regulations set up to prevent industrial and commercial construction that isn't immediately necessary.
28. FREYMAN: Sounds good, Johnny.
29. JOHN: These regulations are like bulldozers...clearing the way for moderate-priced homes for veterans.

30. FREYMAN: How moderate is moderate...where houses are concerned?
31. JOHN: Well, the houses will sell for less than ten thousand dollars ...or rent for less than eighty dollars a month, and most of them are much lower than that. This is important because many veterans who are lucky enough to find places to live, say they're paying more for them than (FADE) they can afford.
32. MAN: (A MUG) The irony of it...the irony of it...I can't take it.
33. WIFE: (THE UPPITY TYPE) Do lower your voice, Maxwell, fahther is napping in the next room.
34. MAN: Oh "fahther" is, is he...well, will ya tell me one thing? When ain't your old man snoozin'?
35. WIFE: Indeed, Maxwell!
36. MAN: Never mind...never mind. I know the answer myself...when that lazy good fer nothing brother of yours gets the couch first. And your sister...
37. WIFE: Maxwell, I think you're being most ungracious...the way you talk about Poppa and Junior. After all, they're doing us a favor by living with us. This is the only house we could find...and we couldn't even afford the rent for this if they didn't pay part. It isn't such a bad house either.
38. MAN: I've slept in better foxholes than this dump. The irony of it...you'd think we couldn't afford a home of our own.
39. WIFE: Well, we c'n't, dear.
40. MAN: Who can't? You find me a nice little eight thousand job today ...and we moves in tomorrow!
41. WIFE: That's just it...the few houses that are on the market cost much more than we can pay.
42. MAN: Well, we got to find one soon. I'm tired of falling out of bed in the morning and joining that mob scene waiting to get washed. You'd think it was a nylon line or something.

43. SOUND: BANGING ON WALL

44. WIFE: Sh-h-h...there's fahther banging on the wall for quiet.

45. MAN: (SHOUTS) Quiet! Quiet! I can't even talk in my own home!

46. SOUND: DOOR SLAMS

47. FREYMAN: Yes, Johnny, the prices of new houses are important. They must fit the pocketbooks of the veterans..

48. JOHN: Mmmm hmmm. Mrs. Freyman. And you know, prices aren't all that complicate the housing problem. Manpower is short, for another thing. But scarce building material is really the chief bottleneck.

49. FREYMAN: Well, haven't there been more building supplies on the market since VJ-Day?

50. JOHN: Yes, there have...in spite of work stoppages in the coal, steel and lumber industries. But it just isn't enough yet. New building materials may help out a little.

51. FREYMAN: Oh I've heard of some of those new materials...and the new designs for houses. Don't they sound wonderful?

52. JOHN: I really go for those all metal houses.

53. FREYMAN: If they'll make living cleaner and more convenient...that's for me.

54. JOHN: Well, that is one silver lining to the dark cloud on the housing horizon. We're working toward houses that will make life easier for the whole family.

55. FREYMAN: Happy day when there's less drudgery for mother...fewer chores for father...and even the children have less of those endless number of small jobs.

56. JOHN: But meanwhile, there aren't enough houses to go'round. Another thing that's holding back more houses is obsolete building codes.

57. FREYMAN: I don't follow you, Johnny. Explanation, please.
58. JOHN: Well most cities....and some of the States...passed building codes a long time ago. They're designed to protect life, health, and property.
59. Freyman: You mean like how thick the walls should be....?
60. JOHN: Mmm hmm.....and just what kind of plumbing you have to use.
61. FREYMAN: Well, I don't get it, Johnny. It seems to me that if we want safe houses.....building codes are very necessary.
62. JOHN: Oh, they are.....but the thing is, many of them are out of date. There are so many new developments in housing materialslike panels with plastic cores and precast lightweight concrete.
63. FREYMAN: Those new insulating materials?
64. JOHN: Right. But with these old fashioned building ordinances, you can't build houses with these new improvements....unless you're pretty good at untangling an endless amoung of red tape.
65. FREYMAN: And I thought it was just a case of....not being enough houses to go round. Now I can see Mr. Wyatt has the job I would like most not to have.
66. JOHN: Me too! But in spite of the difficulties, the veterans housing program is making progress. And I think this is a good time to ask our guest, Mr. Wilson W. Wyatt, the National Housing Administrator, for the up-to-the-minute news on the housing program.
67. WYATT: I'm glad to be able to say, Mrs. Freyman and Johnny, that in the last five months, the housing industry has moved from almost a dead stop to close to the all-time record of American building in the peak year of 1925.

68. FREYMAN: Well, that sounds good, Mr. Wyatt.....but just how far have we gotten?
69. WYATT: The program is just hitting its stride. And I believe production of veretan's homes will continue to increase steadily, providing effective price control measures are maintained. But even then don't expect any overnight miracles.....or spectacular skyrocketing of production.... It will take time, even with record production, to catch up with the tremendous demand.
70. JOHN: But why are we so short of homes all of a sudden?
71. WYATT: You see, Johnny, during the war homebuilding had to be cut to the bone so that materials and manpower could go into war production. When millions of men were demobilized, we were already short of places to live. We had to switch back from producing tanks and planes and ships to turning out building materials and houses, and that takes time. But we are moving ahead rapidly on that front. Lumber production, for instance, has more than doubled since last December. But as fast as materials pour out, they are immediately swallowed up by this record rate of building today.
72. FREYMAN: Well, Mr. Wyatt, with so many people needing houses...why is there a housing program only for veterans?

73. WYATT: As I said before, veterans came back to find that homes were already short and they were the last in line. Yet they had to give up their homes to fight for the rest of us. Until we can get enough homes and apartments for everyone, it is only fair that veterans, who risked the most and now have the least chance, should be the first to be cared for. But we're getting production moving at high levels, and that in time will care not only for the veterans but for others who need better housing. But meanwhile, more than sixty percent of the married enlisted men who were discharged from the service last December were still without suitable homes... or apartments....of their own up to last April.
74. FREYMAN: Imagine! How can you check up on all those people?
75. WYATT: Well, the Veterans Administration made a survey....at the request of the National Housing Agency....and the questionnaire showed.....(FADE)just what the situation was.....
76. MAN: We're living with the wife's sister.....
77. WIFE:almost getting to like the trailer.....
78. JOHN:four of us in one room.....
79. MAN: Ever since I got out of the army.....housing trouble.....
80. FREYMAN:so we had to sleep on the benches right in Union Station.....
81. MAN:the apartment's too small.....and the rent's more than we can afford.....
82. JOHN:tents aren't so bad.....til it rains.....
83. WIFE: still looking for a home.....
84. MAN:And we can't find a house we can afford.....
85. FREYMAN:been looking for a room.....

86. JOHN: apartment of our own?.....we been looking but all we hear is....no dogs!
87. WIFE: no cats!
88. MAN: no noise'.
89. FREYMAN: No brats!
90. WIFE: For rent?
91. JOHN: Too late!
92. MAN: No family of eight!
93. SOUND: PAUSE
94. WYATT: And that Mrs. Freyman and Johnny, is a good cross-section of the worst housing problems some veterans and their families face. But the sooner the average consumer helps solve the veterans' housing problem, the sooner we'll all have houses.
95. JOHN: I guess that answers the question of "When can I build a house".....
96. FREYMAN: Mr. Wyatt, you mentioned the average consumer helping solve the housing problem. How do you mean?
97. WYATT: Well the backbone of the housing program is really in each community....expecially in the more than four thousand cities where there is a Mayor's Emergency Housing Committee.
98. JOHN: Say, I've heard of them!
99. WYATT: Since these committees cover more than ninety per cent of the country's major population centers, they can do a good job if they have the support of all of us.
100. FREYMAN: Just who serves on these Emergency Housing Committees, Mr. Wyatt? I suppose there are representatives of the local housing authority.....and the builders?

101. WYATT: And the building material manufacturers and dealers....
real estate operators, and representatives of labor groups,
veterans, and religious groups.....all appointed by the Mayor.
102. FREYMAN: How about consumer groups?
103. WYATT: Of course, they're represented too.
104. JOHN: Mr. Wyatt, what do these committees do?
105. WYATT: Well they're the main link between the community and the
National Housing Agency. One of their jobs is to find out
how many houses are needed in their community and to set
their local housing goal. They also help to make building
sites available, recruit and train labor, revise obsolete
building codes, break local material bottlenecks, plan new
housing projects and anything else that will increase
housing facilities.
106. FREYMAN: -I thought the veterans housing referral centers had something
to do with the mayor's committees too.
107. WYATT: They do....Of course, the referral centers were set up to
meet the critical emergency conditions. They see that
veterans get first crack at vacancies. If the committee is
on its toes, there won't be any veterans sleeping in
automobiles.
108. JOHN: Now I see just where the average consumer comes in.....It's
up to all of us to help any way we can to improve the
housing situation.
109. WYATT: Right.....vacant apartments or houses or rooms....even a
temporary home-sharing arrangement can mean a lot to some
veterans.
110. FREYMAN: Well.....I know quite a few people who have turned their
spare rooms over to veterans....I mean rented them of
course.

111. JOHN: And I've heard about a lot of people who would if they could. They have unfinished attics...but they don't have the money to make them livable.
112. WYATT: Well you tell them Johnny, they can get low-interest loans insured by the Federal Housing Administration....to remodel... their house.....if they plan to rent to veterans.
113. JOHN: Well, I certainly will. And thank you Mr. Wilson W. Wyatt for being CONSUMER TIME'S guest today, and giving us that encouraging report about the housing program.
114. FREYMAN: And thank you for those tips on how to help veterans get homes.....and getting a loan for renovating an old house. And speaking of housing tips, Johnny, we have a free booklet on housing for our listeners.
115. JOHN: That's right friends. You can get a copy of the booklet called "Before you buy a home" by writing to CONSUMER TIME, WASHINGTON 25, D. C. This booklet tells you the facts about inflation and your home investment....and what you can do to protect yourself.
116. FREYMAN: It also has a handy checklist you can use to see what the total costs will be for the home you are buying or building.
117. JOHN: For your free copy of "Before you Buy a Home" write to CONSUMER TIME, Washington, 25, D. C. Be sure to include your name, address, and the name of the station to which you are listening. What's our story for next week, Mrs. Freyman?
118. FREYMAN: Next week, Johnny.....the story of the House on Hazard Hill!

119. JOHN: Hmmm.....sounds spooky. Spooky and dangerous.
120. FREYMAN: Well, it isn't a mystery story.....but it has got to do with danger in the home. When we visit the House on Hazard Hill we'll hear the story of accidents in the home.....and how to prevent them.
121. JOHN: So be with us next week for a nice safe edition of
122. Sound: CASH REGISTER
123. ANNCR. CONSUMER TIME!
124. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.....CLOSE DRAWER
126. ANNCR.: CONSUMER TIME, written by Eleanor Miller and directed by Frederick Schweikher, is presented by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and its affiliated independent stations. It comes to you from Washington, D. C.

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